

The Crucible – Act One – Study Guide

1. At the opening of the play, Betty is described as being “inert.” What does this mean?
2. Four people live in the Parris house. Who are they?
3. Reverend Parris admits to Abigail that he not only saw the girls dancing, but that he also saw someone naked. Which character do we learn was the naked girl?
4. Ann Putnam is described as a “twisted soul.” What events from her life might have caused her to become “twisted”?
5. What rumor about Betty has Ann Putnam heard in the village?
6. Whom has Reverend Parris invited to Salem? Why?
7. Here’s a list of the girls who were involved in the midnight dancing: Tituba (technically not a girl, but she was there), Abigail, Betty, Ruth Putnam, Susanna Walcott, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Warren. Who asserts herself as the leader of the group? Who is the most anxious to confess?
8. What did Abigail drink during the midnight dancing party? Why?
9. What has happened between Abigail and John Proctor in the past? Why does Abigail hate John Proctor’s wife?
10. Who is Rebecca Nurse?
11. Who is Giles Corey? Why is he concerned about his wife, Martha?
12. The Putnams support Reverend Parris. John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, and Giles Corey do not. Why is there a faction against Reverend Parris? (Try to come up with at least 3 reasons.)

13. John Proctor leaves to “drag [his] lumber home.” Why does this anger Thomas Putnam?
14. What is Reverend Hale carrying when he arrives at the Parris house?
15. Hale says, “What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants, and who is better than the minister?” What does this mean?
16. Here’s a list of all the things the girls were apparently doing in the forest: dancing (naked), drinking chicken blood potions, and eating some kind of frog soup. Abigail first says that what they were doing was “only sport.” Do you think they really believed they were engaging in witchcraft? Or were they just having fun?
17. Abigail eventually puts all the blame on Tituba. Why is Tituba an appropriate scapegoat for Abigail to choose?
18. What does Tituba claim the Devil told her or promised her? (Name at least 3 things.)
19. Whom does Tituba name as witches?
20. Whom do Abigail and Betty name?
21. What is apparently going to happen to the people who have been named? How do we know this?